

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 DHA-05 /076 W

-----082657 220126Z /72

R 212330Z OCT 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3669

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CSCE, SOPN, UR

SUBJECT: CSCE: TWO WEEKS OF SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE

SUMMARY: TWO WEEKS AGO AT THE START OF THE CSCE MEETINGS IN BELGRADE, THE SOVIET PRESS TREATED THE SUBJECT WITH CAUTION AND CIRCUMSPECTION, STRESSING THE "POSITIVE", "NON-CONFRONTATIONAL" ATTITUDES WHICH, IT CLAIMED, PREDOMINATED AMONG THE DELEGATES. IN THE INTERVENING PERIOD THE TONE HAS CHANGED SOMEWHAT AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE PRESS HAS BEGUN TO COMMENT MORE CRITICALLY. THUS, WHILE STILL STRESSING THE NEED TO TAKE THE HIGH ROAD IN BELGRADE AND TO REFRAIN FROM CRITICISM OF SHORTCOMINGS IN CSCE IMPLEMENTATION, SOVIET PUBLIC COMMENT IS NONETHELESS BEGINNING TO SINGLE OUT TARGETS FOR ATTACK. END SUMMARY.

1. SOVIET PRESS DURING THE FIRST WEEK APPEARED TO FOLLOW THE

LEAD OF THE SOVIET CSCE DELEGATION IN MAINTAINING A POSTURE OF CALM REASONABLENESS AND WAITING FOR SOMEONE ELSE TO THROW THE FIRST STONE. INTERNAL NEWS DOMINATED THE PRESS AND HENCE FOR THE FIRST WEEK WE SAW ONLY SHORT NEWS ITEMS (SELECTIVE TO BE SURE) AND POSITIVE COMMENTS, PRINCIPALLY QUOTING FROM SOVIET DELEGATION CHIEF VORONTSOV'S REMARKS. THE SOVIET WEEKLY, LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, HOWEVER, OPENED A NEW APPROACH ON OCTOBER 12 WITH A LONG BLAST AT THE U.S. CSCE COMMISSION MEMBERS SERVING ON THE AMERICAN DELEGATION. IN ITS TYPICAL, HEAVY-HANDED WAY THE LITGAZ PIECE TRIES TO SMEAR THE COMMISSION MEMBERS -- E.G. ALFRED FRIENDLY, JR., IS LINKED TO AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES -- AS INDIVIDUALS INTENT ON SABOTAGING THE MEETINGS. THE COMMISSION REPORT WHICH WAS DISTRIBUTED IN BELGRADE COMES IN FOR HARSH CRITICISM ALSO. INTERESTINGLY, THE CRITICISM OF THE U.S. AND SOME OF ITS DELEGATION MEMBERS HAS THUS FAR CAREFULLY AVOIDED ANY DIRECT OR PERSONAL CRITICISM OF AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG, ALTHOUGH LITGAZ CAME CLOSE WHEN IT IMPLIED THAT THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMMISSION REPORT IN BELGRADE CONTRADICTED THE STATEMENT OF THE "HEAD OF THE AMERICAN DELEGATION" THAT HE WOULD AVOID CONFRONTATION.

2. MORE AUTHORITATIVE SOVIET PRESS COMMENT (LITGAZ IS A MIDDLE-LEVEL BLUNDERBUSS) CAME SOON AFTER WHEN PRAVDA AND IZVESTIYA

SPICED THEIR REPORTAGE OF BELGRADE NEWS WITH DOSES OF COMMENT.

PRAVDA OCTOBER 15 CARRIED A LONG ARTICLE BY S. VISHNYEVSKIY AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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V. ZHURAVSKIY FROM BELGRADE WHICH IS PRINCIPALLY DEVOTED TO THE "POSITIVE" APPROACH OF THE SOVIET AND OTHER EE DELEGATIONS. THE AUTHORS PRETEND TO SEE A FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO THIS AMONG OTHER DELEGATIONS, NOTABLY THE AUSTRIAN, AND SWISS. MOST OF THE COMMENT CONSISTS OF REASSURING REMARKS THAT ALMOST ALL OF THE DELEGATES AT BELGRADE WISH TO SEE A NON-CONFRONTATIONAL MEETING AND AGREE THAT THE "BENEFITS" OF DETENTE ARE SUBSTANTIAL AND SHOULD BE REINFORCED BY "A REALISTIC AND BUSINESSLIKE APPROACH" IN BELGRADE. BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME THE DUTCH REPRESENTATIVE IS CRITICISED FOR BEING AMONG "SEVERAL WESTERN DIPLOMATS" WHO DISTRACT ATTENTION FROM THE "REAL CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS" WHICH, JUDGING FROM THE ARTICLE LIES ALMOST ENTIRELY IN THE AREA OF

BASKET TWO ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL ISSUES.

3. THE AUTHORITATIVE INTERNATIONAL WEEK REVIEW IN OCTOBER 16

PRAVDA PLAYS THE SAME LINE ABOUT THE NEED FOR A BUSINESSLIKE ATMOSPHERE", BUT IS CRITICAL OF "CERTAIN CIRCLES IN NATO COUNTRIES" WHICH ARE TRYING TO TURN THE BELGRADE MEETINGS INTO "AN ARENA OF CONFRONTATION" AND TO "FREEZE THE POSITIVE PROCESS OF PEACE AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION." TASS PIECES FROM PARIS AND LONDON IN

THE SAME ISSUE INTRODUCED THE FIRST DIRECT CRITICISM OF THE U.S.
REPLAYING WESTERN PRESS COMMENTS, TASS PORTRAYS A DIVISION IN THE
NATO GROUP OVER U.S. INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL POLITICS OF
THE BLOC STATES WHICH COULD LEAD TO CONFRONTATION."

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4. FINALLY, V. MATVEYEV WRITING OCTOBER 18 IN AN IZVESTIYA
"COMMENTARY" COLUMN, HAS THE MOST EXTENSIVE AND AUTHORITATIVE
COMMENTS SINCE THE SESSION BEGAN. THE PIECE IS A CAUTIOUSLY
WORDED ONE. MUCH OF IT IS SELF-CONGRATULATORY ABOUT THE "INITIA-
TIVES" OF THE SOVIET UNION AND OTHER BLOC STATES. MATVEYEV
CHOOSES NOT TO FOLLOW UP THE SPECIFIC CRITICISM OF THE U.S.
AND DUTCH APPEARING EARLIER IN THE WEEK, AND INSTEAD CHIDES NATO
NATIONS IN GENERAL TERMS FOR POOR PARTICIPATION AND NO "INITIA-
TIVES." "PRACTICAL ACTIONS," NOT ONLY WORDS (FRG'S VAM WELL IS

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QUOTED ON THE COMMITMENT OF THE WEST TO MILITARY DETENTE) ARE
NEEDED IN BELGRADE NOW, ACCORDING TO MATVEYEV.

5. COMMENT:

THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF THE BELGRADE MEETINGS
THE SOVIET PRESS IS STILL BEING VERY CAUTIOUS AND TENTATIVE IN

ITS CRITICAL COMMENTS ON THE CONFERENCE. MATVEYEV'S FAILURE TO
TAKE UP THE TASS AND PRAVDA CRITICISMS OF SPECIFIC COUNTRIES IS
EVIDENCE OF SOVIET RETICENCE, AT THIS POINT, TO ENGAGE IN DIRECT
ATTACKS, WHETHER SHARP OR MILD. NONETHELESS THE TARGETS HAVE
BEEN IDENTIFIED -- THE U.S., THE DUTCH, AND NATO IN GENERAL --
AND WE EXPECT SOON SEE THEM AGAIN SINGLED OUT. BUT FOR NOW THE
LINE IS TO STRESS THE NEED FOR EVERYONE TO TAKE THE HIGH ROAD

AND REFRAIN FROM CRITICISM OF SHORTCOMINGS BY INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES.
(AS OF THIS WRITING OCTOBER 21 TASS-ENGLISH HAS CARRIED A SHORT,
SHARP REPORT ON THE GOLDBERG-VORONTSOV EXCHANGES CONCERNING THE
CZECH TRIALS. WE EXPECT, HOWEVER, TO SEE SOME REPORTAGE OVER
THE WEEKEND OR EARLY NEXT WEEK IN THE RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE PRESS.
IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW IT IS HANDLED).
TOON

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Message Attributes

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